

~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~

July 31, 1970

ETS-HAK-448-3

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: R. C. Robinson

SUBJECT: The Mining or Blockade of Cambodian Ports

You asked me to prepare a memorandum on the possible closure of Cambodian ports by either blockade or mining. The problem has been examined within the context of using either U.S. or allied forces.

Blockade. The South Vietnam Navy (VNN) has approximately 64 ships and craft suitable for use in a blockade-type operation. All are radar-equipped and presently being used in riverine or coastal missions. Considering their limited size, speed, endurance and capability, U.S. support would be required to establish the environment necessary to success. As a minimum, the U.S. would be required to provide extended logistics support and conduct surveillance of shipping in the international waters of the Siam Gulf. In light of these restrictions, it is concluded that the Vietnam Navy could conduct successful operations only against VC/NVA shallow-draft craft. They could not prevent the passage or entry into port of deep-water ships if such ships are accompanied by naval escort, and would be able to assure only marginal success against unescorted ships.

The U.S. Navy could readily impose and maintain a quarantine or blockade if the diplomatic risks are acceptable in light of the daily confrontation between U.S. warships and Bloc shipping. In this regard, the political status of the blockade country becomes a key issue. Should Cambodia remain neutral, our actions could be in response to her request for assistance. On the other hand, the imposition of a blockade against an avowedly hostile government would be a decidedly war-like act, not only against Bloc shipping, but the established government as well.

Mining. Should it be necessary to seal Kompong Som (Sihanoukville), mining would be far more effective than either blockade or quarantine.

JCS review completed for PACOM.

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OSD, Navy
Reviews
Completed

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

Such action could be taken quickly, in low profile, and with no requirement for the daily confrontation which accompanies a blockade-type operation. Mining could be conducted by either U.S. or South Vietnam forces as set forth below.

South Vietnam

Air Force. Twelve VNAF A-1H aircraft, operating from Bien Hoa, would be employed during daylight hours. Mines would be provided from U.S. stocks in the Philippines. From time first U.S. transport aircraft arrives for pick-up at Cubi Point, first mine could be placed in the water in 66 hours, with the entire mission completed in 72 hours. Training of VNAF crews would require only two to three days. However, the A-1H aircraft is not "certified" for carriage of Mark 36 destructor mines. CINCPAC has initiated action to obtain such a certification. No technical problems are seen at this time.

Navy. The VNN could utilize nine PGM craft, loaded from an LST, with up to eight mines each. The PGMs would proceed from an RVN base to arrive during the hours of darkness. The mines would be transported to An Thoi, RVN from U.S. stocks at Cubi Point, Philippines. From the time the first transport aircraft arrives for pick-up at Cubi Point, the first mine could be in the water in five and one-half days, with the mission completed in six days. The training of VNN crews would require five to seven weeks, as compared with the relatively short period of training required for air delivery.

United States. If a decision were made to use U.S. forces, we could lay 34 deep-water mines and seed the shallow approaches with 138 mark 30/40 destructors. The entire task could be completed with 34 aircraft sorties from one carrier in about four hours. The mines are on board Seventh Fleet Ships and forces have been trained for such an undertaking. No plans exist for mining Kompong Som with U.S. Navy surface forces. Any such endeavor would require training and ship re-configuration of some magnitude.

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